Towards Post-Nationalism?

Diasporic Identities and the Political Process

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Towards Post-Nationalism? Diasporic Identities and the Political Process

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The Age of Diaspora?

> "Even as the legitimacy of nation-states in their own territorial context is increasingly under threat, the idea of the nation flourishes transnationally. Safe from the depredations of their home states, diasporic communities become doubly loyal to their nations of origin and thus ambivalent about their loyalties to [their host nation.]... there is now a delocalized transnation, which retains a special ideological link to a putative place of origin but is otherwise a thoroughly diasporic collectivity."[1]

This paper will attempt to map the emergence over the past decade of a new form of diasporic politics. Diasporas have, of course, existed in one form or another since the movement of human beings began, and in this sense they are not a new force. This however is not the claim. Rather this paper is interested in charting the emergence of conditions which favour a political practice whose key features include transnationalism, plurality and the hybridity/fluidity of political practices. Scholarly interest in diasporas and their potential has recently grown to an unprecedented degree. In the current period of globalisation, researchers from a wide range of discursive projects seem to believe that the role of diasporas is acquiring greater significance and the number of diaspora groups appears to be expanding in an increasingly transnational and multicultural environment.[2] Academics and politicians alike have latched on to diasporas and their potential; the result being a resurgence in interests and awareness of the notion, particularly in recent literature on transnationalism, post-colonial and cultural studies as well as in sociology, anthropology and international relations. The nineties have seen the appearance of new journals such as 'Diaspora', 'Public Culture', 'Cultural Anthropology' and 'Transition' which examine, discuss and theorise on culture, identity and transcultural experiences.

The main thrust of current academic argument with regard to diaspora suggests that diasporas are in the course of evolving and that this shift is tied to processes of globalisation which enable them to flourish and mobilise. The central idea here is that the age of globalisation is producing a *new breed* of diaspora. This new breed is enabled by today's instant communications and rapid transportation to "forge and sustain multiple social relations that link their societies of origin and settlement."[3] It is through these multiple ties that diasporas are able to become politically active in both their host society *and* home country.

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[1] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 172

[2] Gabriel Sheffer, 'Ethno-National Diasporas and Security', *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 1, Spring, 1994, p. 60

[3] Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, Christina Szanton Blanc, 'From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration', *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No.1, Jan. 1995, p. 48

One of the main reasons diasporas have attracted so much attention, and particularly from scholars who are interested in the political dimension of their activities, is because they are proving to be effective and significant as non-state actors. In fact, some scholars believe that diasporas may become "alternative or parallel foci of loyalty to the nation-state."[4] Whereas some research appears to welcome the apparent increasing role and influence of diasporas in political, economic and social life, other work appears more reserved about this phenomenon - at times even foreboding in tone - warning of the dangers of diasporas' unchecked powers. However, what all research on diaspora and politics has in common is its interest in the issue of *dual or divided loyalty*. Most of the work in this area draws considerable attention to the way in which many diaspora groups maintain allegiance to their homelands. This makes sense since diasporic communities *do* frequently act on behalf of their country of origin. Indeed, there is ample evidence that diasporas provide services and support to their homes. However, this kind of behaviour has led some observers to exaggerate the bonds which exist between these immigrant communities and their countries of origin, making it appear as if diasporas groups take on the role of 'unofficial ambassadors' or 'agents' for their home, abroad. This view is reinforced by the fact that leaders in the home society often think that "the raison d'etre of 'their' diaspora is to express unswerving loyalty to the homeland and render services to it in the diaspora's host countries."[5]

Certainly, the growing sway in support of diversity and multiculturalism as well as new swells of immigration are reinforcing the increasing role of ethnic groups in shaping the external relations of countries like the United States. However, bold statements which suggest that diaspora interests have the power to triumph over national interests in shaping the foreign policy of host countries[6] assume that diaspora communities operate as united and monolithic blocs of ethnic, cultural and political consciousness. This assumption is misleading for it shows no regard for the nuances associated with the *hyphenated identities* often found in diasporic communities. Furthermore, it would be false to suggest that all members of diaspora communities are fervent political activists or maintain more than occasional contact with their countries of origin. Roughly speaking, diaspora groups can be separated into two types: those whose members are assimilationist and - like many other ethnic minorities - virtually indistinguishable from other members of the mainstream host

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[4] Robin Cohen, 'Rethinking 'Babylon': iconoclastic conceptions of the diasporic experience', *New Community*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 1995, p. 5

[5] G. Sheffer, 'Middle Eastern Diasporas: Introduction and Reading', *Journal*, Issue No. 2, July 1997, p. 4

society in terms of general lifestyle, behavioural patterns and social attitudes; and those individuals who seek linguistic, religious, cultural and even political autonomy and choice. Few writers who are interested in the political activities of diasporas stop to consider the role that identity formation plays in the lives of these groups and how it may influence their politics.

Instead, an unbalanced and deceptive representation of diasporic politics is often presented, helping to fuel concerns that these communities are being allowed to acquire too much power so that national identities are under challenge. For example, Benedict Anderson in some of his most recent work conjures an image of diaspora groups conducting a "radically unaccountable form of politics" involving the transnational trafficking of arms, money and drugs.[7] Critics wryly describe diaspora participation in homeland politics of this sort as "long distance" and "e-mail nationalism."[8] Exercising power without responsibility is certainly a foolhardy and dangerous game. However, writers such as Anderson and others who draw attention to ethnic groups' 'militant activities', not only exaggerate the ability of immigrants to engage in real homeland politics from afar, making it sound much easier than it really is, but also ignore the fact that some diaspora groups share little in common with their home. Occasionally diaspora and homeland find themselves diametrically opposed on certain issues. In such cases diasporas even lobby against their homeland. The US Filipino movement against Marcos and the US Cuban movement opposed to Castro are examples of this. These incidents are well documented in the literature.

The communications technology available today certainly means that the potential to influence politics at home exists for diasporas or other external groups. However, emphasising disproportionately the clandestine and militant activities of diaspora organisations is misleading since most of their political activity in areas of high politics usually centre on mobilising political and diplomatic support for their cause and attempting to attract international attention to what they regard as their plight. The ability of a diaspora to be politically effective to a significant degree, and not simply to attract bursts of political and public attention to a given cause, requires more than access to the latest technology.

What is lacking in debates about diaspora loyalties is that the 'duality' of these allegiances is rarely fully addressed as the term is strictly meant. What the phrase 'dual loyalty' actually

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[6] Samuel Huntington, 'The Erosion of American National Interest', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 5, September/October 1997, p. 40

[7] Benedict Anderson, 'Exodus', *Critical Enquiry*, Vol. 20, Winter 1994, p. 327

refers to is the way in which diaspora loyalties are split between host and home. However, in many cases where diasporic politics are under scrutiny, 'dual loyalty' seems to be used as a shorthand for claiming that a diaspora's allegiances lie with its home *at the expense of its host country*. This sort of negative reception occurs in more conventional forms of theory. The point that is often missed when talking about dual loyalties is that like diasporic identities, they are 'dual' and not simply one-sided, partial or prejudiced as is often suggested in favour of the home.

This apparent deficiency will be addressed in this paper by examining the concepts of identity and culture, and exploring how they relate to diasporic politics. The notion of diaspora has been adopted by post-colonialists like Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall and used as a lens through which to understand and explain cultural identities.[9] The intention here is to do the reverse and use culture and identity as a lens through which to view diaspora communities and acquire a better understanding of their transnational politics. Ultimately the hope is that this process will assist in assessing their role as actors in international relations and providing a more balanced interpretation of their abilities - therefore correcting the undue negative reception recent diasporic practices have met with in some quarters. By outlining key features of diasporic identity and experience, this paper will highlight the way in which the concept has evolved over the years and look at the influences that globalisation and the changing nature of citizenship and nationality have had on the process.

Diaspora: Beyond the Nation-state?

> "One major fact that accounts for strains in the union of nation and state is that the nationalist genie, never perfectly contained in the bottle of the territorial state, is now itself diasporic. Carried in the repertoires of increasingly mobile populations of refugees, tourists, guest workers, transnational intellectuals, scientists and illegal aliens, it is increasingly unrestrained by ideas of spatial boundary and territorial sovereignty."[10]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] See Stefan Helmreich, 'Kinship, Nation, and Paul Gilroy's Concept of Diaspora', *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, Fall '92. Also, see Paul Gilroy, 'Diaspora, utopia and the critique of capitalism', in Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, London: Hutchinson, 1987. And see Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Jonathan Rutherford [ed.] *Identity, Community, Cultural Difference*, Lawrence and Wishnant, 1990

[10] A. Appadurai, p. 160

Scholars of diaspora and ethnopolitics are in agreement on one key point: that the so-called withering of the nation-state and the decline in ideologies of state nationalism are having a fundamental impact on the evolution of diasporas. It is useful here to delineate which aspects of the nation-state's demise have had a significant impact on the emergence of diasporas. The 'decline of the nation-state' is becoming so ubiquitous a catch phrase that, beyond vague allusions to the forces of globalisation and transnationalism, many writers actually omit to explain how the nation-state's decline is having repercussions for diasporas. Certainly a more open and liberal political climate in some countries has encouraged diasporas to shrug off the shackles of compliance which characterised them and push themselves to the forefront of domestic and international politics. However, this is an insufficient explanation.

Admittedly, modern diasporas have come far since the days of the large migrant influx into Western Europe after the second World War when newcomers were viewed simply as labour fodder. The newly found confidence of contemporary diasporas is in sharp contrast to the inferior status which marked them out in the past. The "model of immigrant settlement [was one] in which immigrants eschewed the national identity as well as the customs and values of their birth."[11] Although many aspired to emulate their successful elites, and some did manage to climb the occupation ladder, the experiences of the majority were of systematic exploitation, discrimination and blocked advancement. This experience made assimilation into the host society harder, encouraging them to retain and cling to their close knit communities, maintain their distinct cultural, linguistic and religious identities and preserve links with the homeland through community organisations and institutions such as churches and schools. It was not until the mid-seventies that interest in implementing measures to assist migrants' integration was shown, but this was primarily in response to what was perceived as the need to absorb these ethnically diverse groups who it was believed posed a threat to the cultural homogeneity and ultimately the national cohesion of the state.[12] It is this issue of potential threat to national cohesion which is at the centre of the nation-state/diaspora nexus and which needs to be addressed in order to shed light on whether there is indeed a link between emerging diasporas and potentially 'weakening' states.

Diaspora communities' ability to preserve a distinct ethnic identity, as well as their bonds with their country of origin, have often led the host society to regard them as outsiders and question their loyalty and motives. In fact diaspora communities have often served as easy

[11] Schiller, Basch, Blanc, 1995, p. 51
[12] Maud S. Mandel, 'One Nation Indivisible: Contemporary Western European Immigration Policies and the Politics of Multiculturalism', *Diaspora*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp. 89-90

scapegoats for social unrest during hard economic times in many large migrant countries. The sensitive issue of dual loyalty has always been a source of potential conflict, and in the past was a cause of persecution. The Holocaust, the genocide of Armenians in Turkey during the First World War and the expulsions of Asians from East Africa in the seventies are examples of this.[13]

Diaspora power has always been a cause of conflict between diaspora communities and their host governments, especially when the latter have disapproved of diasporas' attempts to act on behalf of their home countries, and have tried to curb these activities. Clashes of this sort are not the norm though. Well-integrated diaspora communities rarely challenge the sovereignty of their host openly. In fact, the homeland government's eagerness to use its diaspora to further its cause has occasionally led it to compromise its diaspora's position, causing confrontation between them. In turn, a growing number of host governments have now become more tolerant of ethnic pluralism in their societies, hence allowing diaspora communities largely to go about their own business.

As a result, concern that loosening the rein on ethnic immigrants will threaten the security and cohesion of ethnically diverse states is gradually diminishing in some societies, particularly in the United States where questions are being asked about "whether the melting pot has ever existed."[14] Attempts by states in Europe and North America to come to terms with the reality of their multiethnic societies has led proponents of multiculturalism to argue that host governments should no longer expect their ethnic minorities to integrate or assimilate. This move towards abandoning programmes aimed at assimilation has meant that some diaspora groups have "recently experienced an unprecedented range of linguistic, religious, cultural and even political choice."[15] As a result they have been encouraged to mobilise politically and assert themselves culturally. National societies which have been largely produced by immigration, such as the United States, Canada and Australia, have gone faster and further than some of their European counterparts towards developing a more open multicultural attitude to immigration. Citizenship laws in these countries have become more liberal and citizenship is granted to immigrants "without requiring common ethnicity or

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[13] G. Sheffer, 1994, p. 73

[14] Kimberly A. Hamilton and Kate Holder, 'International Migration and Foreign Policy: A Survey of the Literature', in *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Winter 1991, p. 200. The melting pot refers to an assimilationist ideology which espoused the collapsing or 'melting' of varied ancestral groupings into a uniform American type and culture.

[15] Khachig Toloyan, 'Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment' *Diaspora*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1996, p. 30

cultural assimilation."[16] As a result, immigrants are more free to choose the degree to which they wish to integrate or assimilate, and or whether they prefer to preserve their culture and identity and live within a diaspora community. These developments have imbued diasporas with such self-confidence that, to paraphrase Khachig Toloyan, what were merely dispersions of people have been encouraged to proliferate and become diasporas.[17]

The more open and liberal political climate which has developed in the last couple of decades has allowed diasporas to flourish, contradicting the predictions of assimilationists who argued that immigrants would gradually be absorbed into the host counties' societies. Theories about the process of assimilation found in the literature on migration and nation-state building, argue for the desirability of homogenising migrants and examine the processes by which ethnicity is eroded.[18] It appears that these ideas have not stood the test of time. Diasporas have not disappeared. Instead of a gradual erosion of ethnicity, some theorists argue that we are actually witnessing a reassertion of ethnic identities. Old homeland connections are being reactivated by diaspora communities which were previously thought to have completely integrated within their host country. Sections of the Polish and Irish communities in the United States are examples of this.[19]

So, at first glance, the emergence of diasporas cannot be explained by the fact that the nation-state is in any imminent danger of extinction but rather because there is a move in some political quarters in host countries towards abandoning the idea of instilling immigrants with a "sense of the national ideal."[20] These politicians -- at least in theory -- are beginning to appreciate and accept that diaspora groups are permanent and will continue to retain allegiances to and affiliations with their countries of origin. In return, the nation-states are requiring that immigrants' prime loyalty be to its host-country. As might be expected, these kinds of expectations often hamper efforts to adopt a more inclusive approach to ethnic groups.

Host governments however have always been concerned with the problem of dual loyalty, fearing that providing ethnic minorities with a voice could undermine national identity and destabilise social cohesion. The very term 'state' gives us some indication of the type of

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[16] Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller [eds.] *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, London: Macmillan, 1993, p. 14
[17] K. Toloyan, p. 20
[18] Sita Bali, 'The Political Implications of Migration: A Study of the British Sikh Community' , PhD University of Kent at Canterbury, 1992, p. 113
[19] Ibid, p. 114
[20] K. Hamilton and K. Holder, p. 200

political loyalty which this institution prefers: ones which are static, fixed and clearly delineated identities. The notion of the diaspora, however, opens up new spaces for the contestation of political identities - identities which refuse to recognise the boundaries and limitations of their politics. Today, the increasing power and visibility of ethnic minorities and the accompanying social problems which growing migration is producing, have raised concerns over what has been described as "cultural pollution", "overforeignisation" or "minorisation."[21] This has led most West European governments, despite the anti-racist rhetoric and celebration of multicilturalism, to seek to stem the flow of immigrants and be selective about who passes through their borders. These developments have also made politicians sensitive to calls which continue to insist on a policy of integrating those already present. So, although many politicians pay lip service to multiculturalism, government action such as the French policy which forbade Muslim girls from wearing the head-scarf *hijab* in school,[22] is interpreted by some as an example of efforts to integrate ethnic minorities and discourage difference. Therefore, the real picture of the relationship between host governments and ethnic groups today is a very ambiguous and contradictory one. In the words of Robin Cohen:

> "The world has changed; the space for multiple affiliations and associations that has been opened up outside and beyond the nation-state has also allowed a diasporic allegiance to become both more open and more acceptable." [23]

Simultaneously, however, concern among politicians and the public alike in Europe in particular that diasporas are being allowed to acquire too much power so that "national identities are under challenge..,"[24] has led to calls to check their power. Questions regarding the degree of civil and political rights ethnic groups should be entitled to, become contentious domestic issues, and the voices of these groups are simply not heard through all the shouting.

Turkish nationals living in Germany are a case in point. High unemployment in the late 80s and early 90s combined with public concern over the presence of illegal immigrants fueled a racist backlash against Turks, the largest group of foreign workers resident in Germany.[25] The racism which resulted has led to blocked job opportunities for many Turkish guestworkers. However, the Turkish diaspora is not doing itself any favours either. The

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[21] Ibid, p. 199
[22] M. Mandel, p. 97
[23] Robin Cohen, 'Diasporas and the nation-state: from victims to challengers', *International Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 1996, p. 517
[24] Ibid.

exclusion many German Turks face has at times been a consequence of their own conduct. For example, the activities of many Turkish extremist political organisations on German soil have ended up in violent episodes with local police, branding Turks as trouble makers in the public eye. Notorious in the last decade for instigating clashes and violence between themselves; Turks and Kurds in Germany are helping turn public opinion against ethnic groups who engage in political activities related to the problems faced by their home countries. A survey conducted as far back as January 1985 revealed that:

> "[Fifty-seven per cent] of all Germans.... believed that foreigners were going too far when they demonstrated against political conditions in their homelands. Another 28% believed that they should demonstrate quietly, while 15% were undecided."[26]

Objections to diaspora participation in politics are created at least in part out of the indistinct civil status imposed on foreign migrants by the immigration and naturalisation laws of their adopted country. In Europe, some immigrants still remain marginalised and disadvantaged, particularly in Germany where the state links citizenship to blood in an effort to maintain cultural homogeneity. Therefore, some immigrants even after years of residency still find they are at a half way house, possessing the right to permanent abode yet technically remaining in the ambiguous position of guest worker and unable because of legal restrictions to obtain full citizenship and all the rights and privileges that go with it. Therefore, many still remain second class citizens and easy scapegoats for social unrest. These groups have been unable to integrate comfortably into their host societies either because they have felt unwelcome or because they are unwilling to abandon elements fundamental to their cultural identity in order to do so. Hence the public profile and degree of participation in politics that ethnic groups achieve is related to the wider questions of assimilation and integration and more directly tied to the "host country's legal, political, administrative and cultural-ideological apparatus for addressing immigration."[27] In this sense, the controversy surrounding diaspora participation in politics is tied to issues of assimilation and integration and also calls into question key practices and rules governing citizenship, as well as predominant notions of the nation-state and territorial sovereignty.

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[25] Wesley D. Chapin, 'The Turkish Diaspora in Germany', *Diaspora*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 275
[26] Ibid, p. 285
[27] K. Toloyan, p. 20

Nationalism, Citizenship and De-territorialisation

As if diasporas' questionable loyalties were not enough, it could be argued that the *changing nature of citizenship* is proving to be instrumental to the growing emergence and strength of these groups. Some of the recent academic literature on citizenship and nationality argues that the ideas and definitions surrounding these concepts are changing.[28] Exclusive membership of a nation-state is losing its value and significance because individual and collective rights are receiving legitimacy and backing from other organs and institutions such as supra-national associations and from within the machinery of human rights.[29] Yasemin Soysal argues that we are moving towards a "new model of membership anchored in deterritorialised notions of persons rights"[30] which she describes as 'post-national'. Her underlying argument, is that rights are becoming increasingly removed from the national level, and are becoming located and being legitimated at the transnational level. The following quote from Soysal is illustrative:

> "..[M]any transnational organisations such as the International Labour Organisation and the Council of Europe have taken an active interest in immigrant populations by situating them within the bounds of human rights discourse, thus contributing to the redefinition of their status and expansion of their rights in host countries."[31]

These developments have significant implications for diasporas in that the disadvantages that migrant status entails in terms of minimized rights and constrained privileges are diminishing as immigrants' rights are increasingly coming under the jurisdiction of international organisations, and are no longer the exclusive domain of the nation-state. Hence the power which host governments could wield over diasporas is also being lost. According to Soysal:

> "National citizenship or formal nationality is no longer a significant construction in terms of how it translates into certain rights and privileges, as attested by the status of post-war immigrants. Rights, participation and representation in a polity are increasingly matters beyond the vocabulary of national citizenship. What we have is

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[28] David Cesarani and Mary Fulbrook [eds.], *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe*, London: Routledge, 1996.
[29] David Cesarani and Mary Fulbrook, 'Introduction', in Cesarani and Foolbrook, p. 6
[30] Ibid.
[31] Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, 'Changing Citizenship in Europe: Remarks on Postnational membership and the national state', in Cesarani and Fulbrook, p. 20

> a trend towards a new model of membership anchored in deterritorialized notions of personal rights." [32]

However, proponents of the 'post-national' school over-exaggerate the impact of supranational organisations and their potential to assert the rights of resident foreigners. In practice these international instruments must be ratified and enforced by individual states. As Lydia Morris points out:

> "...individual rights may be established in supranational fora, but their immediate guarantor is the nation state. Thus rights may be expanded beyond a specific nation-state, but the exercise of those rights will usually be tied to national territories."[33]

How does all this affect the debate on diasporas? What emerges from the above is the "question of how far transnational rights do in fact erode national sovereignty."[34] Morris is right to remind us that it is the nation-state which enforces rights and laws. Nevertheless, the notion of citizenship is undergoing a transformation. Evidence seems to suggest firstly that its significance is diminishing, and secondly that its meaning is shifting to take on board new realities. Surveys conducted in Europe show that immigrants today are less likely to seek citizenship of their countries of residence since the status of permanent resident entitles them to full civil rights and privileges virtually indistinguishable from those of a formal citizen, with the national voting right being the only fundamental exception.[35] Therefore the demands to acquire "[n]ational citizenship or a formal nationality" are falling as this status is no longer seen as a "significant construction in terms of how it translates into certain rights and privileges."[36] The following quote is illustrative:

> "...one of the most striking characteristics of the post-war immigrants is their predominantly non-citizen status. An estimated 15 million immigrants in Europe are foreigners in their countries of residence; they do not hold a formal citizenship status."[37]

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[32] Ibid, p. 21
[33] Lydia Morris, 'Globalization, migration and the nation-state; the path to a post-national Europe?' in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 48, No. 2, June 1997, p. 197 - 198. Yasemin Soysal concedes the point that implementation lies with the nation-state see Cesarani & Fulbrook, 1996, p. 24
[34] L. Morris, p. 198
[35] Soysal, pp. 20-21
[36] Ibid. p. 21

Let us return to the nation-state. The argument so far has been that it is not the decline of this structure which makes the emergence of diasporic politics possible, but rather that its persistence - albeit in a weakened form - is actually of key importance when seeking to understand the political efficacy of new transnational forces. In their critique of globalisation, Hirst and Thompson argue that the one area in which the state remains almost wholly dominant is the control of populations. "People are less mobile than money, goods or ideas," they assert, "[and] in a sense they remain 'nationalized', dependent on passports, visas and residence and labour qualifications."[38] While these authors certainly have a point with regard to the functional and technical competence of the nation-state, we need to question today the extent to which the imagination of political identity remains nationalised - and whether political identity remains the exclusive reserve of a single national-territorial referent. A passport today certifies where one can seek employment but proves nothing about where the holder's national or ethnic loyalties lie. Benedict Anderson makes this point very well when he refers to the 'counterfeit quality' of contemporary passports:

> "...in our age, when everyone is supposed to belong to some one of the United Nations, these documents have high truth-claims. But they are also counterfeit in the sense that they are less and less attestations of citizenship, let alone of loyalty to a protective nation-state, than of claims to participate in labor markets. Portuguese and Bangladeshi passports, even when genuine, tell us little about loyalty or habitus, but they tell us a great deal about the relative likelihood of their holders being permitted to seek jobs in Milan or Copenhagen. The segregated queues that all of us experience at airport immigration barricades mark economic status far more than any political attachments."[39]

Therefore, citizenship is increasingly being seen primarily as a legal category as opposed to a description of political identity. As we have seen the nation-state has traditionally attempted to restrain the various political identities within its borders with appeals to collective unity in the name of national interest. Under the conditions of globalisation, however, we can see that political identities are becoming increasingly disembedded from the context of the nation-state.

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[37] Ibid. p. 20

[38] Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalisation in Question*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p. 171

[39] B. Anderson, pp. 323-324

Diasporas: A New Field of Study ? Have diasporas changed?

Research, particularly in the United States, is currently burgeoning on the political and economic activity of diasporas, especially among more recent Hispanic, Afro-Caribbean, Filipino and Haitian migrant groups. Studies show that the effects of their actions are felt in both the society in which they have settled and in the homes which they have left behind. Scholars argue that the enabling technologies of globalisation are implicated in the ability of these groups to sustain these ties across great distances. This process assists diasporas in what appears to be an increasing engagement in political and economic issues which transcend the borders between host and home. Growing evidence of contemporary migrants successfully establishing themselves in their new country while simultaneously keeping up links with their homelands has led academics to label them 'transmigrants',[40] the products of increased transnational migration. The following quote makes the point more succinctly:

> "Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state. They are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside. However, at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions conduct transaction and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated."[41]

American anthropologists, currently in the throes of rethinking their discipline to incorporate this all important transnational element, are also encouraging a wider public debate on the changing nature of migration and the transforming character of 'current-day immigrants.'[42] As well as littering their writing with vignettes which demonstrate how contemporary immigrants flex their political muscle both in the United States and at home, these scholars are also helping to formulate a more positive image of immigrants, challenging traditional depictions of them as displaced, down-trodden and powerless. Although representations of diasporas[43] as marginalised is an accurate portrayal of the lives of many diaspora peoples throughout history, this has not always been a universal experience. Certainly, unskilled diaspora members have filled (and still do occupy) low status manual labour positions while

[40] N. Glick Schiller, L. Basch, C. Szanton Blanc, p. 48
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

living a confined, sheltered existence mainly among others of the same community. But there are past and present examples of diasporas faring much better. John Armstrong, in his seminal piece on 'Mobilized and Proletariat Diasporas', has shown how, historically, skilled members of diasporas such as the German Jewish, Armenian and Chinese, successfully incorporated themselves into the dominant society of their host country by marketing much sought after skills in communication, medicine and commerce.[44] Today, numerous examples exist of diaspora groups which are success stories in terms of their economic prosperity, upward mobility and political influence.

Observing an improvement in the standard of living and general quality of life among some diaspora groups, academics involved in their study have been keen to interpret what they regard as a positive shift in their overall experiences and patterns of existence within a theoretical or conceptual framework. In order to demonstrate and explain how diasporas have changed, Robin Cohen, traces diaspora experiences of survival and adaptation in exile, following their development and proliferation. He puts diasporas' ability to transcend what he calls 'the victim tradition' (their life of hardship and discrimination), to enrich their lives and to adapt to new sociocultural forms, down to the consequences of globalisation.[45] This process of globalisation has as Cohen puts it, enabled diasporas to "survive and thrive."[46] Other researchers see globalisation as *facilitating* the "tendency of today's transmigrants to maintain, build and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origin."[47] In globalisation, physical presence or proximity is no longer a prerequisite for the practice of community. "Globalisation concerns the intersection of presence and absence," writes Anthony Giddens, "the interlacing of social events and social relations 'at distance' with local contextualities."[48] This quality can be implicated in the ability of certain groups to engage in, sustain or reproduce particular forms of community across great distances and in the face of competing traditions.

Access to better communications, cheaper transport, satellite transmissions, telephone, facsimile, videos, personal computers and the Internet mean that even though family,

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[43] At this particular stage I will be using the terms diaspora, immigrant, transmigrant and member of ethnic group loosely and interchangeably. These terms will be discussed and defined later on.
[44] John A. Armstrong, 'Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 70, No. 2, June 1976.
[45] R. Cohen, 1996, p. 513
[46] Robin Cohen, 'Diasporas, the Nation-State and Globalisation', in Wang Gungwu [ed.] *Global History and Migrations*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, p. 135
[47] N. Schiller, L. Basch and C. Blanc, p. 52
[48] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, p. 21

relatives and friends live hundreds and thousands of miles away, diaspora members today can keep in touch, maintaining better links with home than ever before. To quote Benedict Anderson:

> "..the communications revolution has profoundly affected the subjective experience of migration. The Moroccan construction worker in Amsterdam can every night listen to Rabat's broadcasting services and has no difficulty in buying pirated cassettes of his country's favourite singers. The illegal alien , Yakuza-sponsored, Thai bartender in a Tokyo suburb shows his Thai comrades karaoke videotapes just made in Bangkok. The Filipina maid in Hong Kong phones her sister in Manila and sends money electronically to her mother in Cebu. The successful Indian student in Vancouver can keep in daily touch with her former Delhi classmates by electronic mail. To say nothing of an ever-growing blizzard of faxes."[49]

At this juncture, observers of diaspora might feel the need to affirm that these communities have always maintained ties with their homelands. After all, preservation of contact with the homeland is a defining feature of diaspora. This begs the question of whether todays diasporas are so different in kind from earlier ones - are we talking about different dynamics altogether, hence the need to rename them 'transmigrants'? Or is the difference simply that maintaining ties today is so much easier than before? The American anthropologists currently engaged in building a transnational anthropology believe that the differences between old and new diasporas are not just a matter of being able today to sustain ties with greater efficiency and ease. The view of Schiller et al. is that these 'new transnational interconnections...differ in their intensity and significance from the home ties maintained by past migrations.'[50] But even this statement is rather ambiguous. In weighing these claims, one needs to consider that the more liberal climate of today's multicultural societies is likely to encourage contemporary diasporas to make more of their transnational ties, and also to be less concerned about recrimination from their host-states. The increased visibility of their links with home might help towards creating the *impression* of marked distinctions in strength and importance.

Whether the process of globalisation has enabled diasporas to 'survive and thrive' is hence debatable. It has, however, certainly given rise to a great deal of analytical confusion. With the increasing numbers of people resident outside their home-countries there are now more groups than ever jostling to be incorporated under the banner of diaspora.

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[49] B. Anderson, p. 322
[50] N. Schiller, L. Basch and C. Blanc, 1995, p. 52

Diasporic Definitions

Part of the problem is that with time the term has evolved, incorporating new meanings. The result is that the term *diaspora* has been expanded to include a wide array of people, anything from an asylum seeker and political exile to an ethnic immigrant or foreign worker. The more traditional, tighter definition and understanding of the term such as that offered by Milton Esman which describes a diaspora as simply "a minority ethnic group of migrant origin which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin,"[51] have become unfashionable, and currently the term is devoid of precise meaning. For example, labour migrants who readily move yet maintain close links with kin at home are likely to be branded as being in diaspora when in fact there may simply be diasporic elements to their behaviour such as travel and the maintenance of links with a homeland. Hence, much of the writing ostensibly about diasporas is often about traits some of them may or may not possess. In this sense, the analytical utility of the term is becoming somewhat diluted. Furthermore, can temporary employees and sojourners which Cohen describes as today's 'global migrants' really be considered as part of a diaspora? Diasporas are permanent settlers, not temporary ones. This also throws into question the often made equation between rising migration and an increasing political role for diasporas. Therefore, in considering changes in the phenomenon of diaspora, it might be interesting to judge the evolution of their experiences in relation to the evolution of the term itself.

Only a handful of writers have attempted to define *diaspora* and have laboured over tracing the roots of the term and determining the key features which distinguish diasporas from other ethnic minorities and migrant groupings.[52] Of them, Khachig Toloyan is probably the most ardent critic of the term's misuse, asserting that "[diaspora] is in danger of becoming a promiscuously capacious category".[53] In his extensive historical review of the term's development, Toloyan points out how labels such as "expatriate, exile, ethnic, minority, refugee, migrant, sojourner and oversees community" are commonly and routinely being used interchangeably with diaspora.[54] He goes on to show how a diaspora is distinguishable as a

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[51] Milton J. Esman, 'Diasporas in International Relations', in Gabriel Sheffer [ed.], *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*, London: Croom Helm, 1986, p. 333

[52] Milton Esman, William Safran, Robin Cohen, Khachig Toloyan, Gabriel Sheffer and Walter Connor are among the scholars who have made a concerted effort to define diaspora and outline its main features.

[53] K. Toloyan, 1996, p. 8

[54] Ibid. p. 10

'collectivity' whose identity differs from that of the dominant host society, while other groups such as the ones mentioned above are simply "a scattering of individuals."[55] Unlike other writers who concentrate on determining the features which define diasporas, Toloyan examines the internal workings of diasporas emphasising the significance of the "norms, values, discourses and practices of diaspora's communal institutions" in constructing "diasporic-specific social identities."[56]

Culture, Ethnicity and Nationality - hyphenated identities?

Diasporas do not frequent one singular cultural space because they are simultaneously occupying two areas, that in which they have settled and that which ties them to their home. This central feature of their existence has aligned diaspora with terms like hybridity, creolization and syncretism.

> "If my son is both Indian and American, which *one* is he *really?* Which is the real self and which the other? How do these two selves coexist and how do they weld into one identity? How is ethnic identity related to national identity? Is this relationship hierarchically structured, such that the "national" is supposed to subsume and transcend ethnic identity, or does this relationship produce a hyphenated identity, such as African-American, Asian-American, and so forth, where the hyphen marks a dialogic and non-hierarchic conjuncture?"[57]

Writers such as Radhakrishnan who focus on the hybrid condition which results from being in diaspora, try to reconcile the difficulties of coexistence between two selves. According to him, some diasporic individuals recite the "reality of a double life, the ethnic private life and the 'American' public life, with very little mediation between the two."[58] Others claim that their different forms of identity do not necessarily stand separately but can be upheld simultaneously. Speaking on behalf of many diasporic writers, for instance, Salman Rushdie claims:

> "...we are not willing to be excluded from any part of our heritage; which heritage includes both a Bradford-born Indian kid's right to be treated as a full member of

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[55] Ibid. p. 29
[56] Ibid.
[57] R. Radhakrishnan, 'Ethnicity in an Age of Diaspora', *Transition, An International Review*, Issue 54, 1991, p. 105
[58] R. Radhakrishnan, *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 206

> British society, and also the right of any member of this post-diaspora community to draw on its roots... [w]e are Hindus who have crossed the black water; we are Muslims who eat pork... we are partly of the West. Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools."[59]

So there is an impression of a kind of double perspective as diasporic individuals are both insiders and outsiders. Therefore, the sense in which hybridity is used in relation to diasporas, describes "a culture composed of people retaining links with the territories of their forefathers but coming to terms with a culture they inhabit. They have no wish to return to their 'homeland' or of recovering any ethnically 'pure' or absolute identity; yet they retain *traces* of other cultures, traditions and histories and resist assimilation."[60]

This notion of diaspora has been adopted by post-colonial writers like Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall and used as a lens through which to understand and explain cultural identities and contemporary society. Indeed much contemporary work on diasporas is situated in post-colonial, post-modern and cultural studies. A central theme of much of this work is the inter-locking of culture, identity and location. The writing calls into question the assumption that there is an immutable link between the three. The concept of diaspora is seen as a useful tool in that it problematises the cultural and historic process of belonging. According to Hall, the notion of diaspora "disrupts the fundamental power of territory to determine identity by breaking the simple sequence of explanatory links between place, location and consciousness."[61] Theorists list a number of external and domestic factors that have undermined the bonds between cultural identity and place, among which are colonial liberation movements, subsequent migration of colonial subjects to the West and civil rights movements.[62] They reject the traditional Western impression of identity which is tied to ideas of purity, essence and homogeneity as opposed to heterogeneity and plurality.[63] For example, communal identity which looks to the homeland and ethnic purity is rejected by Hall.[64] His

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[59] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands, Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, London: Granta Books, 1991, p. 15

[60] Ellis Cashmore [ed.], *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 165

[61] Stuart Hall, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity', in Kathryn Woodward [ed.], *Identity and Difference*, London: Sage Publications, 1997, p. 328

[62] Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, 'Introduction: Displacement, Daisporas and Geographies of Identity' in Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, *Displacement, Diasporas and Geographies of Identity*, Durkam: Duke University Press, 1996, p. 2

[63] Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *'An Introduction to Post Colonial Theory'*, Prentice Hall Europe, Hertfordshire, 1997, pp. 210-11

[64] S. Hall, 1997, p. 328

idea of diaspora identities "are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference."[65] Hall explains:

> "Cultural identity.. is a matter of becoming as well as of being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere have histories. But, like everything which is historical they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power."[66]

The culture of ethnic immigrants does not remain intact. Culture is constantly evolving both in home countries and respective host societies. Pressure on the offspring of ethnic immigrants to revive the cultural practices of the old country and of the past are hence doomed to fail because there is no unchanging, eternal or original source of cultural authenticity to be emulated. Simply put, things cannot continue to be done in "the old way". Many second and third generation ethnics are not interested for instance, in attending evening classes to learn the language of their ethnic descent, or in attending church regularly or receiving holy communion on religious holidays, as their parents and grandparents used to do. When they can sometimes be persuaded to take part in these events it is often under duress or in order not to disappoint their parents. The young manage to find other ways to identify with their ethnic background, usually 'symbolic', which they feel comfortable with and which are more in tune with the times.[67] For instance they might discover their background in more fashionable ways through ethnic music, dress, hair styles, beard types, food and travel.

Exploring the ways in which the culture of 'home' is both recreated in diaspora and transformed through its encounter with a host environment illustrates the construction of diasporic identities. It shows the ways in which diasporas engage in the unconscious or semi-conscious process of re-assessing and reproducing their identities, their belief systems and

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[65] S. Hall, 1990 p. 235
[66] Hall, 1990, p. 225
[67] Herbert J. Gans, 'Symbolic Ethnicity', in John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith [eds.], *Ethnicity Oxford Readers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Gans argues that the future of ethnic groups and cultures in America lies in the realm of the symbolic. His argument hinges on the view that by the second generation many ethnics realise that they do not have to religiously carry out their ethnic practices in everyday behaviour and participate in ethnic organisations in order to 'feel' ethnic. Instead they resort to symbolic gestures such as celebrating a saint's day or religious holiday, attending an ethnic ceremony or festival, cooking ethnic food, going to an occasional parade, supporting the building of a church or synagogue.

loyalties. The question is what it is that makes them still feel members of a diaspora - be it Jewish, Armenian, Greek or whatever - even though they have been living for many years away from home or might have even been born in the host-country? What is it that stays the same for first generation diasporas even when they have been living away from home almost their entire life? What do they carry with them and what do they pass on to their children? How is this maintained and transformed in the new environment? These are the crucial question that must be addressed in discussing diaspora cultures and in examining the ways in which diasporas integrate (or fail to integrate) themselves into the political process. The purpose, is to understand the ways in which these re-constructed ethnic identities influence and shape their ability to become effective political actors, hence exploring the cultural dimensions of political action.

The discussion so far has indicated that ethnic identities both within and across boundaries are fluid and malleable, and are continuously developing and transforming. In the case of third and fourth generation white middle class Americans who practice ethnicity on a 'voluntary' basis, the "membership, content and saliency" of ethnicity has completely changed.[68] Ethnicity is no longer an intrinsic part of their lives in terms of the type of jobs they find, the neighbourhoods they live in, the languages they speak and the people they marry - where it certainly had been for their parents and grandparents. Research on ethnicity in the United States today shows an increase in "ethnic phenomena such as media broadcasts in ethnic mother tongues and ethnic studies courses at colleges and universities, and a growing societal sensitivity to matters of ethnicity."[69] Within this context ethnicity loses its lower class connotation and its association with minority immigrant worker status. It becomes fashionable, intellectual and high-brow, a lifestyle espoused by the young, educated and trendy. Among "third generation immigrants ethnicity has become a form of cultural capital, ... ethnic identity rises along with educational level - hence multi-ethnic chic."[70]

What is significant about this type of ethnicity is its lack of political salience. The reason for this is that these third and fourth generation immigrants have no need to take their ethnicity seriously and hence they tend not to politicise this aspect of their identities. Their livelihoods and individual life experiences have not been compromised and shaped as a direct consequence of their ethnic backgrounds as was the case with their forefathers. Since ethnic

[68] Joshua Fishman, 'Ethnicity as Being, Doing, Knowing', in Hutchinson and Smith, p. 67

[69] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Varieties of Ethnic Politics and Ethnicity Discourse', in Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick McAllisten [eds.], *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 31

identity is often not an intricate part of their daily lives, there is no need to bolster it actively as did their parents or grandparents, for whom it was a core around which to mobilise and organise themselves. Instead, the younger generations experience their ethnicity passively, almost in the same way they take in and enjoy other interests and forms of leisure. Therefore ethnicity is indulged in occasionally and used almost literally to 'decorate' their lives:

> "The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture."[71]

Diasporic not Ethnic

However not all ethnic groups today practice ethnicity on a voluntary basis in this way or regard it as a fashion accessory. Of the many academics who are engaged in the study of diasporas, Toloyan is one of the few who has attempted to explore and discuss the difference between diasporas and ethnic groups. This is a difficult project because the lines separating the two categories are often fuzzy and ambiguous. At a glance, diasporas differ from ethnic groups firstly in that they wish to maintain community cohesion, or to use Toloyan's words to "preserve a collective identity."[72] They assimilate less rapidly into the receiving country than do ethnic groups, maintaining their "identity and solidarity over extended periods."[73] Milton Esman provides a good example of this in the Armenian community in France, which "after three generations...though French speaking and well-established economically, [successfully] retains its group solidarity."[74] Ethnic groups as described earlier on, show no real desire to maintain group cohesion beyond occasional get togethers with family and friends.

Secondly, diasporas maintain significant sentimental and material ties with their homelands. This is primarily in the form of contact and exchange with family and friends, such as constant long distance communication, frequent visits and financial remittances. Diaspora communities, particularly leadership or representative bodies, look to the building and cultivation of relations with their homeland at a public level too. This is usually to secure

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[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid. p. 35
[72] K. Toloyan, p. 16
[73] M. J. Esman, 1986, p. 334
[74] Ibid.

government or official support and assistance for community needs, for instance manpower provisions for language classes and places of worship. Ethnically conscious or aware individuals, politicised sectors and interest groups within the diaspora try to keep abreast of national and political developments in their home country, with some even attempting to influence outcomes. Here as well, ethnic groups stand apart from diasporas in that their links with home are normally few and far between if ever present at all.

Lastly, diasporas organise to provide mutual assistance to meet the interests and requirements - social, cultural, political and economic - of their community. Ethnic communities do not engage in organised or collective action in a consistent manner to forward their interests and promote their claims. In comparison, diasporas "deploy their organisational strength politically in defense or promotion of their collective interests."[75] They channel considerable funds and human resources into organisations which lobby to influence the policies of their hostland governments on behalf of the homeland.[76] Diasporas also operate as voting blocs backing candidates of their ethnic group to secure support for their interests.[77] It is in these three main ways which diasporas differ significantly from ethnic groups and which enable them to engage in political activities. As Toloyan argues:

> "The distinguishing diasporan feature tends to be the existence of a multitiered minority, consisting of the committed, the activists, and sometimes a handful of radical activists or militants. They constitute the 'leadership elites' or, in another parlance, an 'interest group', whose members staff and fund organizations that have specifically diasporan concerns: they lobby for or against the homeland government (..the US Filipino movement against Marcos) or raise funds for the homeland (...the resettlement of Jewish emigrants from Russia in Israel..) or struggle to mobilize a transnational religious community in the service of a new homeland movement (Sikhs in Canada)."[78]

However, it would be misleading to suggest that all members of diaspora communities are fervent political activists or maintain more than occasional contact with their countries of origin. The American Jewish community which is commonly regarded as probably the most successful ethnodiasporic lobby in the United States, contains members who are largely assimilated in the host society and are "identifiable only by name and kinship affiliations."[79] In fact, many second and third generation individuals who are "claimed as...diasporans by

[75] Milton J. Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994, p. 8
[76] S. P. Huntington, p. 39. Also, see K. Toloyan, p. 17
[77] K. Toloyan, p. 17
[78] Ibid. p. 18-19

their leadership,"[80] are like many ethnics virtually indistinguishable from other members of the mainstream host-society in terms of general lifestyle, behavioural patterns and social attitudes. And in parallel with members of ethnic groups, they too engage in what are in effect symbolic acts of ethnicity i.e. participating in the occasional ethnic event or ceremony.

Furthermore, the different diasporic configurations of 'committed', 'activist' and 'militant' (identified above), are not simply a matter of some individuals feeling more ethnic than others. The reality is that many individuals shift between different roles adapting their behaviour to changing circumstances or even to suit their mood. As Arthur Mann points out:

> "I have observed... certain minority people playing one role in the presence of local majority people, a second role equally artificial, in the presence of more militant members of their own minority, and a third role, more natural, with their own friends, all minority people but none of them aggressively minoritarian."[81]

Toloyan reaffirms these points, with his assertion that the boundaries separating diasporas and ethnic groups are not 'fixed' or always as 'clear cut' as the above depiction might indicate.[82] As a result of the ambiguity which stems from attempts at trying to draw clear distinctions between the two categories, Toloyan argues that he is instead inclined to talk of "individuals and communities who behave as ethnics in some spheres of life, as diasporans in others and, most importantly, who shift from one to the other."[83]

Current research in this area has recognised that the networks created by these groups have become an integral and permanent feature of contemporary international relations. As a result, the main focus on enquiry has now turned to the question of whether diasporas are posing a challenge to the nation-state.

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[79] Ibid. p. 17
[80] Ibid. p. 18
[81] Arthur Mann, *The One and the Many*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 171
[82] Toloyan, p.18
[83] Ibid.

Diasporas: A New Force in Foreign Policy?

In reply to the debate about whether the ascendancy of diasporas will ultimately prove to be a threat to the nation state, Samuel Huntington argues that diaspora interests have already triumphed over national interests in American foreign policy.[84] He argues that it is the growing sway in support of diversity and multiculturalism as well as new swells of immigration which are reinforcing the increasing role of ethnic groups in shaping the external relations of the United States. In contrast to the guarded and ambiguous approach to issues of multiculturalism taken by European political elites, Bill Clinton is currently in the business of promoting ethnic and subnational cultural identities. This means that the pressures previous immigrants felt to integrate have all but disappeared for new immigrants.[85] Huntington succinctly describes the sharp public shift in the United States which has taken place in ethnic groups' favour:

> "Previously immigrants felt discriminated against if they were not permitted to join the mainstream. Now it appears that some groups feel discriminated against if they are not allowed to remain apart from the mainstream...As a result, ethnic identities are becoming more meaningful and appear to be increasing in relevance compared with national identity." [86]

These developments, compounded with the advances in communication and transportation outlined earlier are enabling migrants to maintain greater contact with their homelands which means that these ethnic groups are being "transformed from cultural communities within the boundaries of a state into diasporas that transcend these boundaries."[87] However, in Huntington's account one can detect a hint of paranoia about an ethnicised politics which does not conform to the requirements of the modern political hegemon. Even Benedict Anderson seems to cringe at the thought of his 'immagined communities' running rampant within the nation-state. He conjures an image of diaspora groups conducting a radically unaccountable' form of politics involving the transnational trafficking of arms, money and drugs:

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[84] S. Huntington, p. 40
[85] Ibid, p. 34
[86] Ibid. pp. 33-34
[87] Ibid. p. 38

> "This creates a politics which is 'radically unaccountable', since the participant rarely pays taxes in the country in which he does his politics; he is not answerable to its judicial system; he probably does not cast an absentee ballot in elections because he is a citizen in a different place; he need not fear prison, torture, or death... But, well and safely positioned in the First World, he can send money and guns, circulate propaganda and build intercontinental computer circuits, all of which have incalculable effects in the zones of their ultimate destinations."[88]

In both Huntington and Anderson there lingers a nostalgia for an era in which supposedly self-evident 'national interests' did not have to be problematised in terms of the ethnic other. Pluralism is the foundation stone of the political culture of the United States, and a climate of toleration - often perceived as a by-product of this plurality - has long been a large component of America's allure in the immigrant imagination. "In today's postnational diasporic world, America is being invited to weld these two doctrines together", asserts Arjun Appadurai, "to confront the needs of pluralism *and* of immigration, to construct a society *around* diasporic activity."[89]

As we have seen the term diaspora "opens up a historical and experiential rift between the place of residence and that of belonging. Diaspora identification exists outside of and sometimes in opposition to, the political forms and codes of modern citizenship."[90] So, although firmly settled in one country, diaspora 'identities [and loyalties] are configured in relation to more than one nation-state.'[91] Admittedly, under such circumstances relations with the host government can become tense. It is therefore understandable that diasporas and the nation-state are often seen to be odd bed-fellows. This is because the loyalty which nation-states have come to expect from their citizens is being challenged by the continued allegiance of ethnic diasporas to a foreign land (their country of origin). This is seen ultimately to undermine both the principles of national identity and belonging which underpin citizenship, and the rights and duties which go with it. Indeed some writers believe that contemporary diasporas have become such formidable forces economically and politically as to actually challenge the nation state.

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[88] B. Anderson, p. 327
[89] Appadurai, p. 173
[90] Hall, 1997, p. 239
[91] Schiller, Basch, Blanc, p. 48

Conclusions - Towards Postnationalism?

> "[T]ransnational social forms may generate not only postnational yearnings but also actually existing postnational movements, organizations and spaces. In these postnational spaces, the incapacity of the nation-state to tolerate diversity (as it seeks the homogeneity of its citizens, the simultaneity of its presence, the consensuality of its narrative, and the stability of its citizens) may, perhaps, be overcome."[92]

While still an important structural form, the nation-state seems to be under pressure from a number of transnational forms of identity which seek to practice politics outside, through and across the state's fragmenting frontiers. The multifaceted nature of identity has, under globalisation brought forth a diverse new set of political practices. These involve the possibility that any given individual may have ties and identity claims which pertain to more than one nation or state. Furthermore, the activities of such individuals are not limited to a single political space, either in terms of territory or discourse. One's presence in a particular territorial space does not restrict one from engaging in transnational relations which seek to politicise a component of self-identity which is not 'of" the territory from which these activities originate.

The existence and survival of diaspora groups is proved and tested by time. Many distinct migrant groups have assimilated into their host-societies and can no longer be described as diasporas. Some European nationalities in the United States are a case in point. The survival of a diaspora depends on its ability to reside abroad, but still maintain a conscious, active sense of belonging elsewhere - an awareness of its duality. Richard Marienstras says this is a matter "of will, of conscious decision and, one might even say, determination."[93] Today the term diaspora is used to describe a migrant community whose numbers and behaviour make it visible and its activities felt in both the host and home countries. However a migrant community must stand the test of time in order to confirm its status as a diaspora in the sense outlined above.

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[92] Ibid, p. 177

[93] Richard Marienstras, 'On the Notion of Diaspora' in Gerald Chaliand [ed.] *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation-States,* London: Pluto Press, 1989, p. 125

This paper has sought to demonstrate the ways in which diaspora groups - as primary forms of transnational political identity, push the limits of territorial politics. Under these circumstances, international relations will find an increasing need to understand and account for the dynamics which mediate the migration of politics from the territorial nation-state into new spaces of transnational or global practice. Diasporic identities situate themselves within interstitial spaces that lie beyond the territoral state, and this quality of 'in-between-ness' - of living neither here nor there, of being neither one nor the other (yet somehow both) - is the defining characteristic of these political identities.

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